

HUMAN RESOURCES BULLETIN 99-3

Updates on the Thrift Savings Plan Website

The following are new features accessible on the TSP internet website (<http://www.tsp.gov>)

Account Access Enhancements – You can now request interfund transfers, change or replace your lost Personal Identification Number (PIN), find out how much you are eligible to borrow and check the status of your loan or withdrawal application. You will need your SSN and PIN to get access to your account information.

Annuity Calculator – You can now project how much you will receive each month from a TSP annuity by using the new annuity calculator. Even if you are not interested in a TSP annuity, the calculator may be useful in estimating the income stream your TSP account could generate, i.e. the Account Projection Calculator can help you see how large your account could grow at various contribution levels.

Status of OPM Classification Standards Studies

The following job family and Federal Wage System standards were released during FY 98:

- Professional Physical Science Work, GS-1300
- Clerical and Technical Accounting and Budget Work, GS-500
- General Schedule Leader Evaluation Guide
- Job Grading Standard for Machinist, WG-3414

The following Job Family and Federal Wage System standards are under development:

- Administrative Personnel and Industrial Relations Work, GS-200, thirteen occupations.
- Clerical and Technical Personnel and Industrial Relations Work, GS-200, two occupations.
- Professional Biological Science Work, GS-400, twenty-seven occupations.
- Professional and Administrative Accounting and Budget Work, GS-500, ten occupations.
- Technical Legal and Kindred Work, GS-900, nine occupations.
- Technical Physical Science Work, GS-1300, five occupations.
- Professional Mathematics and Statistics Work, GS-1500, six occupations.
- Clerical and Assistant Work, GS-300, twenty-four occupations.
- Technical Medical and Veterinary Work, GS-600 and 700, twelve occupations.
- Professional Legal and Kindred Work, GS-900, two occupations.
- Administrative Equipment, Facilities and Services Work, GS-1600, seven occupations.
- Administrative Investigation Work, GS-1800, twenty-two occupations.
- Job Grading Standard for Aircraft Composite Work, a new category of work.
- Job Grading Standard for Aircraft Engine Mechanic.
- Job Grading Standard for Aircraft Mechanic.

Team Leaders' Role in Performance Management

In response to various work place changes (downsizing, reduction in the number of supervisors, change in business processes), some managers and supervisors have established teams or work groups to accomplish mission goals and objectives. Team leader positions have been established in some situations. An issue which results from these structural changes is the role of team leaders and the duties that they are required to perform.

In April 1998, OPM issued The Team Leader Guide. The guide is divided into two parts.

Part I reissues guidance for classification of one-grade interval general schedule work leader positions.

Part II provides guidance for classification of two grade interval general schedule team leader positions.

The guide describes twenty specific team leader functions (the first seven coaching, facilitating and mentoring duties are mandatory). In order for a position to be properly classified as a team leader, the team leader must perform at least fourteen of these twenty functions.

The guide also recognizes the role team leaders play in the performance management processes of planning, monitoring, developing, rating, and rewarding employee and group performance. For example, team leaders provide input to the supervisor on performance of the team and individuals but do not assign performance ratings.

The General Schedule Leader Evaluation Guide is available on the web at <http://www.opm.gov>. Go to Index, Classification (Federal Classification Systems), What's New in Federal Classification, General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide. For additional information on Teams visit OPM's new performance management website: <http://www.opm.gov/perform/teams.htm>. This website is loaded with reference materials such as: Building a Collaborative Team Environment, Enhancing Team Performance and Facts about Measuring Team Performance.

FEHB Blue Cross-Blue Shield Pharmacy Data Wipeout

On December 31st the data processing system which supports the Blue Cross-Blue Shield preferred provider retail pharmacy network deleted the enrollment records of most FEHB enrollees. The problem continued into the New Year with nearly 100,000 federal employees enrolled in the Blue Cross-Blue Shield FEHB plan being denied prescription drug authorizations/refills. Blue Cross-Blue Shield will be writing each affected enrollee with instructions on how to process claims for reimbursement. To find out how enrollees will be refunded, see OPM memorandum for Directors of Personnel at <http://opm.gov/insure/memo.htm>

Federal Employees' Compensation Act Regulations

Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) regulations have been rewritten for the first time since 1987. Regulations are available on the web at

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/regs/fedreg/final/98031190.htm>

This 134 page document describes changes which were effective 4 January 1999 and also presents the regulations in a question and answer format. The major changes of interest are:

- Claims for continuation of pay (COP) resulting from a traumatic injury must be filed within 30 days (previously 90 days) of the injury. This new 30-day period also applies to situations in which an injured employee returns to work but must stop working due to the initial injury.
- The medical fee schedule now includes pharmacy and inpatient hospital bills.
- Inpatient hospital services will be reimbursed under a payment system similar to the one used by the Medicare program.
- OWCP may now suspend FECA benefits to anyone incarcerated for a state or federal felony while in prison (the regulations allow a percentage of benefits to the inmate's dependents).
- OWCP benefits can be suspended for anyone convicted of fraud regarding a FECA claim.

Other changes in the regulations include: clarifying the reconsideration process and more detailed guidance for claims involving the liability of a third party.

Source: Federal Employees News Digest, Vol. 48, No. 22.

Cold War Recognition Certificate

Under provisions of Section 1084 of the Fiscal year 1998 National Defense Authorization, the Secretary of Defense approved awarding Cold War Recognition Certificates. Those eligible for this award include all members of the armed forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully served the United States during the Cold War era, from September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991.

Qualified military and civilian personnel interested in receiving the Certificate are required to submit an application. Applications will be accepted beginning April 5, 1999. Applications will appear on a website at <http://sdcw.army.mil/coldwar> on April 5th. The website is online now and contains information about how to apply. If you are interested in this recognition, please visit the website to determine the information you will need to submit with your application.

Applicants are cautioned not to send original required documents, such as DD Forms 214, (Certificate of Release/Discharge from Military Service). Photocopies only should be forwarded since any documents sent will not be returned.

Certificates will be signed by Secretary of Defense. Above the signature, the certificate bears the inscription: "In recognition of your service during the period of the Cold War (2 September 1945 - 26 December 1991) in promotion peace and stability for this Nation, the people of this Nation are forever grateful."

